

venience to themselves, and in a spirit of christian devotedness rarely equalled.

6th. That while our humble and devout thanksgivings are justly due to the Author of all good for this and similar instances of his favor; your committee, nevertheless, feel that we must not stand still, nor suffer ourselves to rest satisfied for the future merely with the measure of liberality and success which may have distinguished the past, if we would worthily perform our part towards enabling the church to extend her ministrations so as to keep pace with the growing wants of the population. We must practically evince the reality of the interest we take in the accomplishment of this truly Christian object, by beneficence somewhat in correspondence with the importance of the objects we have in view; and our debt of gratitude to a gracious Providence for the unexampled prosperity of our country in all its material interests if we would have the consolation of repeating that we "have done what we could."

There are in the present circumstances of our country many things well calculated to awake gratitude and call for the display of an enlarged spirit of christian benevolence. While our fellow subjects in the British Isles are involved in the vast expense and unspeakable honours of a bloody and desolating war, the people of this favored province have enjoyed uninterrupted peace,—no hostile force has threatened their borders—they have tilled their fields in peace and reaped immense pecuniary advantage from a vast pecuniary outlay without themselves incurring additional burthens. For such signal blessings, no one surely, at all imbued with the sincere spirit of gratitude, can be unthankful; or refuse to mark his sense of obligation, by making suitable offerings to the cause of God and his Church, out of the abundance wherewith he has thus been blessed.

For the manifestation and exercise of this commendable spirit of gratitude and liberality, there is within this Diocese, at the present moment, the most urgent need, not only to supply the religious wants of a growing population, as before remarked; but also to mitigate the injury inflicted on the church by the recent act of spoliation.

After the passage of that act it was open to the clergy, either to demand the payment of their guaranteed stipends in full during their lives or incumbences, or to commute their life interests for a capital sum. They resolved upon the latter course, and thus a fund has been secured which will, it is estimated, produce in colonial investments, an annual interest of £12,244 cy. But the actual amount required to maintain the Church, even in

her present state of efficiency is £18,643 per annum, thus leaving a deficiency of £6,399 per annum. This deficiency must be made good or the church's efficiency become most fatally impaired. That the laity of this Diocese will at once appreciate the difficulty of the church's position and cheerfully respond to the appeal for contributions to a sustentation fund which our venerable diocesan will shortly make, your committee will not allow themselves for a moment to doubt. They are strongly of opinion, that if the clergy, by the sacrifice of their own temporary interests to the permanent welfare of the church, have secured her a permanent endowment of over £12,000 per annum; the laity, when aware of the fact, will not hesitate a moment in undertaking to contribute £6,000 per annum, or one half the previous amount, to secure for themselves the regular administration of religious ordinances, and when it is considered that an amount much larger than the sum required to supply the existing deficiency might be contributed for the relief of the Church without trenching to the amount of a single farthing, upon the present resources of individuals, the plea of inability to contribute, so often advanced is at once invalidated. That such is really the case may be demonstrated in few words: all are aware that the secularization act expressly provides that the great bulk of the Clergy Reserve Fund is to be paid over to the county councils for municipal purposes, consequently the remission of taxation in each municipality will be in proportion to the amount received from that fund, if affairs are properly managed; and consequently a sum equal in amount to the reduction of taxation can be contributed by the laity without imposing upon themselves any fresh burthens; or, should the fund be applied to carrying out new enterprises, rather than a reduction of taxation, then a proportionate enhancement of the value of property must be the result; so that in either case the truth of our assertion is most apparent, viz: that the expenditure of the clergy reserves fund within the municipalities for local improvements or the reduction of taxation, renders it possible for the laity to contribute to the relief of the church a much larger amount than has been named, without thereby burthening their resources to a greater extent than at present.

Those who have all along professed to regard the alienation of the clergy reserves from the sacred purposes to which they were devoted as a sacrilegious act of spoliation, your committee doubt not will hasten to prove the sincerity of their professions, by voluntarily contributing in aid of the church, so cruelly despoiled, an amount equal at

least to the benefit they will thus either directly or indirectly derive from the appropriation of the church's property to secular purposes.

Better is it to respond to the just claims of the church now than hereafter at the close of life restore the thirty pieces of silver with the agonizing remorse of Judas. However tempting to the covetous heart may be the prospect of increased gain, be it remembered that Achan's curse will attend it. Upon serious reflection, who is there that can resolve to reserve this bitter portion for his last moment. A just sense of our accountability and unworthiness at the best will surely cloud the last mortal struggle with enough of bitterness and distress without the deliberate addition to its pangs of remembrance of wilful and repeated acts of sacrilege. As reasonable and christian men we will not, we cannot deliberately incur so great a responsibility. You are not required to do some great thing,—to make some great and unheard of sacrifices disproportioned to your means, but simply to refund for religious purposes from your increased wealth a portion equal to the benefit you will derive from the appropriation of the church's inheritance to your use.

And happily in this sad conjuncture of her affairs the church has not been found destitute of an organization which renders her legally capable of gathering in and managing the united offerings of her members. The Diocesan Church Society, of which we form a branch, has been invested by the legislature with certain powers which enable it to discharge this duty with effect; while its numerous and multiplying ramifications through every part of the Diocese render it a most fitting agent for the purpose.

It is an institution, moreover, that in other respects can scarcely fail to conciliate the regard and affection of every right-minded christian. Performing all the functions of a Bible Society, a religious book and tract society, a church building and Church Endowment Society and a Missionary Society, it furnishes a system of unlimited expansion and if faithfully sustained and strengthened by the zeal and substantial gifts of the Laity of our communion, cannot fail to become a most efficacious instrumentality for supplying the religious wants of the country in every particular.

Commending this necessarily brief statement of facts to your most attentive and favorable consideration, your Committee respectfully beg leave to present their report.

D. E. BLAKE,
Chairman.

February 25th 2856.